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THE SOVIET-CUPAN RELATIONSHIP: SYMBIOTIC PARASITIC? (U)
MAY 80 G MARCELLA, D S PAPP

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6 THE SOVIET-CUBAN RELATIONSHIP:
SYMBIOTIC OR PARASITIC?

9 Research memo.,
by

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Composition of this memorandum was accomplished by Mrs. Lisa A. Ney.

FOREWORD

This memorandum evolved from the Military Policy Symposium on "The Soviet Union in the Third World: Success and Failure," which was hosted by the Strategic Studies Institute in the Fall of 1979. During the Symposium, academic and government experts discussed a number of issues concerning this area which will have a continuing impact on US strategy. This memorandum considers one of these issues.

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This memorandum was prepared as a contribution to the field of national security research and study. As such, it does not reflect the official view of the College, the Department of the Army, or the Department of Defense.

DeWitt C. Smith, Jr.

DeWITT C. SMITH, JR.
Major General, USA
Commandant

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THE SOVIET-CUBAN RELATIONSHIP: SYMBIOTIC OR PARASITIC?

The Soviet Union has traditionally relegated Latin America to a subsidiary position in its foreign policy. It has conceded the remote region as an area of US political, economic, and military dominance, neither important to its vital interests nor a promising environment for socialist revolution. Generally speaking Latin America has not been viewed by the Soviets as worth large expenditures in attention, resources, or risks.

These characteristics of Soviet policy towards Latin America did not discourage efforts to promote the growth of Communist movements loyal to the Soviet Union. The parties that emerged were usually small and often were encouraged to maintain a relatively low profile, to propose and adjust to popular front strategies by taking advantage of tactical alliances with "progressive" forces, and to support the Soviet position in international affairs while calling attention to the dangers of American imperialism.

Indigenous revolutionary movements and situations that emerged in the 1950's, 1960's, and 1970's—most notably the

Chilean and Cuban—modified considerably the Soviet calculus of opportunities in Latin America. Whereas Salvador Allende's "peaceful road to socialism" foundered on its internal contradictions, thus depriving the Soviets of possibilities on the west coast of South America,¹ Fidel Castro's earlier nationalist revolution in Cuba provided the basis for forging an enduring and successful relationship based on convergent national interests. The balance of this paper discusses the political, economic, and military components of the relationship, examines from the perspectives of both Moscow and Havana the dynamics of the quasi-alliance, analyzes the role of the United States in that context, and speculates on the future course of Soviet-Cuban relations.

AN OVERVIEW OF SOVIET-CUBAN COOPERATION

Soviet relations with Cuba since Fidel Castro took power in 1959 have at times been tumultuous. In some instances, the level of Soviet-Cuban agreement has been striking: as examples, the agreement to permit Soviet intermediate ballistic missiles on Cuban soil in 1962; the qualified Cuban support for the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia as unfortunate but nevertheless necessary to protect socialism; the recent jointly coordinated military deployments into Africa (Angola 1975, Ethiopia 1978); Cuba's activist role in supporting the rejectionist bloc against the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1978; Cuba's outbursts against China's "dogmatists" and "hegemonists"; and the January 14, 1980 qualified support in the United Nations' General Assembly for the Soviet move into Afghanistan.

In other cases, disagreement between the two has been just as formidable: the latter stages of the missile crisis where the Soviets dismantled and withdrew the missiles without Castro's concurrence; Cuba's criticism that the Soviets did not go far enough in assisting the North Vietnamese against the Americans and the Saigon government; Soviet disapproval of Cuban efforts to export revolution to Latin America in the 1960's, the partial result of serious ideological disputes over the correct revolutionary techniques for Latin America;² plus differences in respective approaches to African problems, most notably on policy towards the Eritrean question and the internal politics of Angola.³

These are examples of the shifting trends in the history of Soviet-Cuban relations and are not intended as portents of future policy

convergence or divergence. In fact the current level of political-military cooperation in Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America, as well as Cuba's emphatic efforts to orient the movement of nonaligned nations towards a pro-socialist bloc position—supports the thesis of convergent policies. Thus the two nations may be minimizing their policy differences, and there is little on the horizon that threatens the convergence of national interests.

Soviet-Cuban relations can best be viewed as a convenient parallel of national interests and foreign policies involving a level of cooperation that may either be extended indefinitely or peak relatively soon. Regardless of which direction these interests may go, both nations evidently derive considerable benefit from the current state of their relationship.

From the Soviet vantage, a close relationship with Cuba offers numerous benefits. The Caribbean island represents a Communist outpost in a Western Hemisphere once conceded to the hegemony of the United States. Cuba has also in recent years become a rare political phenomenon that the Soviets could cite in attempting to improve their international image—a noncontiguous socialist state amenable to pro-Soviet orientation without gross coercion. In recent years Cuba, which is not a Warsaw Pact member, has provided through its military forces and civilian technical assistance personnel a method to further Soviet global objectives.⁴ Finally, Cuba offers potential utility as a military facility and listening post well within the defense perimeter of the United States.

From the Cuban standpoint, close relations with Moscow are similarly beneficial. The Soviet Union provides the Castro government critical economic subsidies. Additionally, Soviet military and technical assistance has lessened traditional weaknesses in in both areas. Thirdly, the Soviet Union serves Cuba as a political sponsor willing to promote and support Cuba's aspirations of leadership in the nonaligned movement. Finally, the Kremlin acts as protector though not as guarantor of Cuban independence from the United States. The extensive levels of Soviet political, economic, and military support provide the Cubans sufficient margin of flexibility to conduct an activist foreign policy all out of proportion with Cuba's physical size.

Thus from the viewpoint of both Havana and Moscow a close relationship provides certain benefits which would not otherwise be

available. Viewed in this manner, a *quid pro quo* relationship—simultaneously symbiotic and parasitic—clearly exists. Given the historical record of troubled Soviet-Cuban relations, it will be useful to turn to the perspective of each party, examine each aspect of the *quid pro quo*, and see how potentially enduring the convergence of national interests may be.

MOSCOW'S VIEW OF RELATIONS WITH CUBA

Revolutionary Cuba has presented Moscow with fascinating and perplexing foreign policy problems. Ever since Castro's accession to power, Soviet policy toward Cuba has reflected the Kremlin's quandary of how best to take advantage of a self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist outpost in the Western Hemisphere.⁵ From the Kremlin's perspective, at least through most of the post-1959 period, too much or too little Soviet support and interest in the Caribbean nation could lead to adverse results for Soviet foreign policy objectives. Either extreme may have resulted either in American intervention in Cuba, thereby highlighting Soviet impotence in the Caribbean region, or in Cuban alienation, thereby depriving the Soviet Union of the reflected glory found in an alliance with one of the few Marxist-Leninist regimes to gain power without the benefit of the Red Army.⁶ To be sure, the Kremlin on occasion fell prey to the urge to pursue more adventurous policy lines in its relations with Cuba—such as the 1962 missiles gamble and the alleged meddling in Cuban affairs that led to the expulsion of the pro-Soviet "micro faction" from the party in 1968. Yet for the most part, Soviet leaders have been cognizant of the constraints within which their policy toward the island must operate.

Nonetheless it is evident that as far as the Kremlin is concerned Cuba has value as the sole Communist outpost in the otherwise inhospitable Western Hemisphere. Cuba consequently serves the Soviet Union as a "showcase of Communism," a showcase which must succeed both from an ideological and a pragmatic viewpoint. The Caribbean island may therefore be viewed as the most successful instance to which the Kremlin may point as proof that Soviet Marxism-Leninism and economic aid has relevance to the economic and social growth of developing nations.

Beyond this, the Cuban revolutionary experience marks the only instance of an indigenous national movement which gained power through its own efforts, adapted Marxism-Leninism to its own

needs and circumstances, and adopted a predominantly pro-Soviet foreign policy orientation. While these facts are often overlooked in the West, Kremlin leaders are certainly aware of them as they consider their own claims to political legitimacy and universal appeal.

Yet another benefit the Soviet Union obtains from close relations with Cuba is support for Soviet foreign policy. The most spectacular instances of this have been in Angola and Ethiopia, where Soviet-equipped (and in the Somalia-Ethiopia war, Soviet-led) Cuban troops have fought for Soviet-supported political movements. Despite evidence that the Cubans may have dragged the Soviets into the Angolan commitment and that the two disagree on the proper policy toward Eritrea, the point to be emphasized is that Cuban forces clearly rendered a service which furthered Soviet and Cuban foreign policy objectives in both African nations. Together with the Bulgarians, the Cubans are probably the most ardent supporters of the Soviet Unions's foreign and domestic policies.

Finally, the Soviet Union benefits from close relations with Cuba in a purely military sense through its use of base facilities on the island. These facilities permit the Soviet Union to periodically test the limits of US tolerance for Soviet air and naval deployments in the Caribbean, provide tropical training for its military, give tangible evidence and reassurance to the Cuban leadership of Soviet support, and assist in the large security assistance program to Cuba.⁷ The Soviets are, however, mindful of observing the post-missile crisis US-Soviet understandings about refraining from granting the Cubans offensive military capabilities. Additionally, the Soviet military presence in the Caribbean enhances the political impact of the apparent Soviet ability to project power into the Western Hemisphere. As evidenced by debate on the Soviet "brigade" in late summer 1979, that presence may also be counterproductive to both Cuban and Soviet interests.

Obviously the Soviet Union has some impelling reasons to maintain close ties with Cuba. Still the question needs to be asked, what costs exist in a close relationship, as seen from Moscow? Perhaps the most obvious disadvantage is the necessity for long-term, large-scale economic subsidy. Given the Soviet Union's own economic problems, the size of that subsidy—reported at \$1.2 billion in 1976 and probably in excess of \$3 billion in 1979—indicates the importance that the Kremlin attaches to close Soviet-

Cuban ties.

A second disadvantage of close ties is the continued risk, even though minimal, of Soviet-American confrontation arising from any of a number of disagreements between Cuba and the United States. Cuba's activist foreign policy, though currently congruent with Soviet policy objectives, has historically been determined by Havana's perceptions of its own interests. Thus if Soviet policy objectives and Cuban activism diverge in the future as they have done in the past, the close identity between the two nations may involve the Kremlin in Cuban initiatives which the Soviet Union deems not in its interest.

What is the sum total of these Soviet calculations? While a definitive answer is of course impossible, it is evident that the Kremlin currently believes the advantages of close relations with Cuba far outweigh the disadvantages. But this trend need not necessarily continue. Seeds of discord do exist, even though they are currently not consequential. Soviet client states have in the past proved less than totally compliant to Soviet desires, and the Soviet leadership has shown little hesitancy to reduce its support for regimes in disfavor or to deny economic aid to enforce compliance.

Nonetheless this remains only a possibility, not a probability. All things remaining equal, there is nothing on the present political-military horizon which suggests that the Soviet Union will downgrade its relations with the Cuban leadership. Setting aside the perspective from Moscow, it is now appropriate to consider the view from Havana.

THE PERSPECTIVE FROM HAVANA

The relationship with the Soviet Union has been useful to Cuban leadership in a number of ways. In the face of an economic embargo and the posture of hostility maintained by the United States, that linkage provides critical political, economic, and military support of an ideologically sympathetic superpower to a militarily vulnerable and geographically and politically isolated island. Thus the search for national security has been a major force driving Cuba to seek closer ties with the Soviet Union. Despite past disagreements on matters of foreign and defense policy, on the proper political and economic structure of Cuba's socialist system, on ideological issues, and on the role of the Cuban Communist Party, there exists sufficient convergence of national interests for

Cuba and the Soviet Union to forge a formidable political-military alliance for the pursuit of common objectives in international affairs. The development of such an alliance is a new phenomenon in Cuba's history, giving that country a bargaining position in world affairs far in excess of its own power capabilities and out of character with its traditional dependency—as a colony of Spain until 1898 and thereafter for all practical purposes as one of the United States.

Relations with the Soviet Union in the 1960's were marked by the tension surrounding the need to maintain the autonomy of the revolution itself and the need to acquire and retain Soviet economic and military assistance at the very same time. Much to the disappointment of the Cubans, the Soviets provided a decidedly conservative response to Cuba's efforts to spearhead guerrilla warfare and national liberation in Latin America during the 1960's. Concurrently, the ongoing revolution of Cuban society disrupted the economy as the result of deemphasis (and later reemphasis) of sugar production, forced industrialization, loss of the US market for sugar, capital and technology, and loss of skilled manpower to emigration. Given continued American hostility toward Cuba, the defeat of the strategy of guerrilla warfare, signalled by the death of Che Guevara in the Bolivian mountains, increased diplomatic isolation within Latin America, and severe economic pressures imposed by Moscow (such as the reduction of petroleum shipments), Havana was forced to draw closer to Moscow. Cuba thus saw the wisdom of relinquishing its ideological misgivings about Soviet pragmatism and conservatism and opted to accept greater Soviet assistance and progressively greater guidance in its own affairs. The Cubans are reluctant to permit this relationship to evolve into a third phase of colonial dependency. However the euphemism is couched in the terminology of relations among socialist countries—be it “socialist solidarity” or “proletarian internationalism”—the fear of neocolonial exploitation must be a genuine one within the Cuban leadership.

Premier Castro recognized the necessity of rapprochement with the Soviet benefactors in 1968 in his celebrated but nonetheless qualified approval of the Brezhnev doctrine of “limited sovereignty” exercised in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Relations solidified further with the July and December 1972 agreements that made Cuba a member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA), and that secured a stable market

for Cuban sugar and nickel through long-term trading agreements and subsequent technical assistance programs. It was further agreed that repayment on the accumulated Cuban debt of \$4.6 billion would be suspended until 1985 and spread over a period of 25 years—tantamount to cancellation. Currently the Soviet Union maintains the price of Cuba's principal export, sugar, at above 30 cents per pound, close to 20 cents above the prevailing international market price. Moreover the Soviets assist in numerous tasks of economic reorganization and development (such as nickel mining and deep sea fishing), provide petroleum, and in sum account for nearly 60 percent of Cuban trade.⁸ The Soviet subsidy and trade are crucial to Cuba, permitting Havana the luxury of buying time for further reorganization and diversification of an economy which gives every indication of continuing to be monoculturist—heavily dependent upon sugar and to an increasing degree upon nickel (of which Cuba has the world's fourth largest ore reserves).

The concept of subsidy also applies to the Cuban military establishment, for which the Soviet Union provides equipment, training, and personnel. Without the price supports and outright grants, Cuba would be hard put to free sufficient manpower resources for its extensive overseas technical assistance, security assistance, and its large combat deployments to Angola and Ethiopia, now estimated to be 19-20 thousand and 12-18 thousand, respectively.⁹

Of Cuba's total trade, 70 percent is with Communist countries, including China. In 1976, Cuban exports to the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) reached \$2.2 billion and imports \$2.1 billion. Soviet trade accounts for 80 percent of Cuba's intra-CMEA trade. In 1976, Cuban exports to the USSR were estimated at slightly over \$2 billion versus \$1.8 billion in imports. Sugar comprised about 90 percent of Cuba's exports to CMEA, with the USSR importing 85 percent of the total.

Cuba will continue to be an important source of sugar for CMEA. The Soviet Union also purchases three-fourths of the island's nickel production at \$6,050 per ton compared to the 1977 international market price of \$5,400 per ton. Citrus, a growing component of Cuban export agriculture, is also intended for the CMEA market, but here also the Soviet Union is increasing its own production.¹⁰

In the area of imports, the Soviet Union in 1977 provided 95 percent of Cuba's petroleum requirements at \$7.00 per ton, a considerable savings over the world price of \$14.00 per ton, and the \$8.00 per ton that the Soviet Union charges East European consumers. The Soviet Union, in view of anticipated decreases in domestic energy production, concluded an agreement with Venezuela in 1976 to exchange petroleum markets for a volume of 20,000 barrels a day. Under the agreement, Venezuela would ship crude oil to Cuba and the Soviet Union would take over some of Venezuela's West European markets. In 1974, Cuba received 155,000 barrels of oil a day from the Soviet Union.¹¹ A similar agreement was concluded between Mexico and the Soviet Union in May 1978 by which Mexico would supply oil to Cuba in exchange for Soviet deliveries to Mexican oil customers in Greece, Turkey, and Eastern Europe.¹²

While Cuba conducts the bulk of its trade with CMEA, it is keenly interested in expanding trade with and securing capital from the West. Because of long-term trading agreements with CMEA and the vagaries of sugar production and pricing, trade with the West will in the foreseeable future be in the area of 30 to 40 percent of total Cuban trade. With the improved prices that sugar commanded in 1974, trade with the West reached 41 percent, whereas it averaged 30 percent in the early 1970's. The volume of sugar production, its price, and its ability to gain access to alternative markets in a period of rising world production and stocks, will thus go a long way toward determining the extent and composition of Cuba's trade with CMEA, the Soviet Union, and the West. At the same time, the degree of convergence of Soviet and Cuban policies will be reflected in the extent and duration of the Soviet subsidy of the Cuban economy. A recently announced Soviet-Cuban commercial agreement for the period 1981-85 appears to buttress the convergence. In his December 27, 1979 speech to the National Assembly, Fidel Castro referred to an economic aid agreement worth approximately \$10 million per day for that period. During those 5 years, the Soviet Union will deliver 61 million tons of oil, or 12.2 million tons per year. Cuba's current annual consumption is 11 million tons. Cuba is scheduled to buy the oil at \$105 per ton (while the international market price for early 1980 was \$250). Cuba will sell 3.5 million tons of sugar per year during the period, for which the Soviets will pay the preferential rate of \$880 per ton, a figure that can be adjusted to any increase in the Soviet oil price.

The \$10 million economic aid per day amount is based on a calculation of \$2.1 billion for sugar combined with a savings of \$1.77 billion on the oil bill.¹³

Future US participation in Cuban trade, optimistically projected at \$600-700 million, is not likely to make an appreciable dent in the Soviet subsidy cost, because the Cuban market promises to be one of limited access for US products and capital. These facts underline the disadvantages that ensue for Cuba in being locked into CMEA trade arrangements, for Cuba sorely needs Western technology and capital to increase the productivity of its dominant sugar industry and the development of the nickel industry.

CUBAN FOREIGN POLICY AND THE SOVIET UNION

The foregoing discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of Cuba's relationship with the Soviet Union does not sufficiently explain certain aspects of Cuba's contemporary foreign policy behavior. Economic and military dependence upon the Soviet Union does not explain the apparent contradictions of this behavior—for example, deployments in African wars juxtaposed with the inclination to normalize relations with the United States and the desire to acquire Western capital and technology. Of course in Marxist-Leninist terms these are not at all contradictory aspects.

Edward Gonzales, a leading scholar on Cuban affairs, has proposed some approaches for explaining Cuba's activist foreign policy. In his view, the assumption that Cuba is dependent on the Soviet Union should not imply that Cuba is a surrogate or proxy for the Soviet Union, essentially doing the Soviet bidding whenever and wherever the Soviet Union calls the shots or going where the Soviets themselves are reluctant to go. Gonzales challenges the surrogate theory for its failure to account for Cuba's own foreign policy interests in its capacity as an autonomous actor.¹⁴ Moreover, he argues that it clearly overlooks cases where Cuba has not acceded to Soviet policy preferences and has acted independently of the Soviet Union and without its logistical support, such as in Africa and Latin America in the 1960's and early 1970's.

The second thesis, that ideology is the force pushing Cuba to spearhead the Third World revolution, is also insufficient by itself since it does not explain certain pragmatic aspects of Cuban policy behavior or Havana's urge for normalization with its ideological enemy, the United States. Gonzales places emphasis on internal

determinants—economic necessity and the role of pragmatic technocrats—as important modifiers of Cuban behavior. Institutional factors, interests of the Cuban military, encourage overseas deployments at the very same time that Cuba seeks to extend its diplomatic relations in the world and to normalize its relations with the United States.¹⁵ Castro's personality and his infatuation with his historical destiny to lead the Third World revolution are also important factors spurring Cuban involvement overseas.

In its relations with Moscow, Cuba sees itself providing considerable benefits in return for the Kremlin's support. As far as the Cuban leadership is concerned, the Kremlin's close ties with Havana confer a considerable respectability and international prestige upon the Soviet Union. Moreover, they constitute ongoing evidence for the validity of Moscow's claim of socialist solidarity. Cuba thus generally views itself as a state freely associated with the Soviets and of course Cuba's geographic situation precludes Moscow's use of force against Havana. The absence of brute coercion indicates that close ties with the Soviets are, in view of Cuba's geopolitical situation, possibly more acceptable to the Cuban leadership than to Eastern European counterparts. Does it also suggest that Cuba can unbind itself from the Soviet link more easily? Certainly, but only if and when that link is no longer necessary for the survival of socialist Cuba.

Thus the Cubans enjoy the friendship of the socialist superpower that brings its economic and military presence virtually within the shadow of the United States and helps create the image of an alliance with which to promote joint objectives in the Third World—an arena which Cuba (as a self-styled Afro-Latin nation) considers its legitimate domain of activity. Indeed, there is hardly a question in international affairs on which Cuba and the Soviet Union do not agree. They both support East-West detente and extol each other's socialist achievements. They work in tandem to undermine the US international position by attacking the shortcomings of American society and by coordinating policies designed to diminish US influence in Africa, the Middle East, and lately with renewed vigor in Latin America.

Cuba, moreover, articulates a world view that sees the "correlation of forces" becoming increasingly favorable to the socialist bloc. For some years the Cubans have actively participated in the nonaligned movement, and recently they have been

reprimanded by other members of that movement—notably Yugoslavia—for their efforts to push the movement into a pro-Soviet stance on world affairs. Havana hosted the 1979 summit of nonaligned and will head the movement's coordinating bureau for the next 3 years. Indeed, President Castro will be the movement's senior statesman upon Tito's death. More recently, Cuba's support for the Soviet Union has earned it considerable costs within the nonaligned movement. In the wake of the Soviet move into Afghanistan on December 25, 1979, Cuba lost its bid to achieve the coveted United Nations Security Council seat. President Castro staked Cuba's prestige on this effort, vowing not to accept defeat.¹⁶ Predictably, the General Assembly debate on Afghanistan presented the Cubans with a "dilemma"—to use their term—as they were forced to vote against the general condemnation (by a vote of 104 to 18) of the Soviet invasion.

Cuba's activist foreign policy thus enhances its relatively limited power and increases its bargaining position vis-a-vis the United States and the Soviet Union. It does so by interposing itself in issues of international and regional concern as an actor with distinctive needs and with leverage that must be reckoned with by other powers. Ultimately it seeks to establish as irrefutable the legitimacy of its socialist revolution and the inviolability of its sovereignty. As socialist values become more internalized in Cuban society, these twin objectives become inseparable from the notion of national security. In a sense, Cuba has externalized the revolution in overseas enterprises in order to defend it at home, from both its internal and external enemies. Externalizing the revolution has the additional effect of rationalizing to its own people the economic shortcomings of Cuban socialism, which the Cuban media attributes to the economic warfare waged against the nation by the United States.

However it rationalizes its linkage with the Soviet Union, there are definite costs and contradictions that Cuba must endure. Cuba's economic and military dependency upon the Soviet Union is well known and not admired in the Third World—the very arena where Cuba seeks to project itself as an independent actor. Moreover, its military diplomacy is feared in many sectors of the world. Cuba is hardly seen as a disinterested revolutionary in Africa, and in the immediate Caribbean area it is only slowly making friends—Grenada, Jamaica, Guyana, Nicaragua. Ties with the Soviet Union, its internal totalitarianism, and its proximity to

the United States will continue to constrain Cuba's efforts to expand its influence in Latin America.

If Cuba's close association with the Soviet Union is resented by many countries, it also may help promote more fractures in international communism. The association earns it the opprobrium of China and Yugoslavia. It also puts it out of touch with Eurocommunism—a movement which asserts ideological independence from the Soviet Union and speaks on behalf of national roads to socialism and the un-Leninist notion of respecting pluralistic structures.¹⁷ The ultimate cost for Cuba may be a mortgage of its image of sovereignty. If it is so evidently dependent upon the Soviet Union, then it is not independent in the eyes of the world. There is, moreover, the remote possibility that the Soviet Union may weaken its support of Cuba in order to concentrate on internal needs or to pursue its own political objectives elsewhere. To render this possibility even more remote and protect its national security, Cuba must make itself indispensable to the Soviet Union while maintaining the seemingly contradictory appearance of an independent and sovereign state. Therein lies the grave risk that such behavior may ultimately involve a compromise of those attributes, since Cuba is relatively powerless by itself.

Other disadvantages ensue for Cuba from the linkage with the Soviet Union. The long-term trading agreements with CMEA complicate Cuba's efforts to diversify trade and acquire sorely needed Western capital and technology. Trade with CMEA is done mostly on a barter basis whereby Cuba does not receive hard currency for the transactions. In recent years, Cuban trade has generated a positive balance with non-Communist countries only once, in 1974, when the price of sugar reached 68 cents per pound. When sugar prices fell and limited quantities were available for export to non-CMEA economies, large negative trade balances followed. The hardships imposed by Cuba's artificial economic relations are not likely to dispose the leadership to compromise the ideological content of its foreign policy nor drive Cuba to alter its relations with the socialist bloc in a major way.

To sum up, Cuba believes that the advantages of close ties with Moscow are more than sufficient to outweigh the disadvantages. Cuba is involved in a very sophisticated political game of asserting its autonomy within a relationship of dependency. The apparent contradictions of Cuba's foreign policy make sense only within the context of Cuba's perceptions of its relations with both superpower

friend and superpower enemy—the Soviet Union and the United States.

SOVIET-CUBAN RELATIONS AND THE UNITED STATES

When all is said and done, what conclusions can be derived from the evolution of Soviet-Cuban relations? On the basis of the preceding analysis, it appears that the relationship will remain close for the foreseeable future. Despite certain strains in the relationship—expressed in policy differences in Africa and the escalating costs of the Soviet economic subsidy—the preponderant evidence indicates that numerous instances of mutual advantage will continue to bind the two socialist states into an intimate relationship. Possible setbacks on the African continent and within the nonaligned movement may intensify some of these strains but not necessarily sever the relationship.

Such an assessment is further strengthened when one analyzes the leadership of both nations. In the Soviet Union, geriatric decisionmakers have long argued for international socialist solidarity, support for the Cuban revolution, and the provision of necessary assistance to friendly socialist states. Given the other benefits the Kremlin accrues from its Cuban connection, and the unlikelihood of a sharp attitudinal change in either the present or emerging leadership group, it is highly unlikely that Moscow will alter its current Cuban policy.

The same argument may be made for the current Cuban leadership, most particularly Castro. Castro retains a siege mentality and his revolutionary fervor combined with his willingness aggressively to exploit opportunities in the Third World and most recently closer to home in the Caribbean have undoubtedly heightened his perception of a hardening US position towards Cuba. Without even considering Soviet economic subsidies, it is evident that Castro's Cuba benefits from close Soviet-Cuban relations. Thus, from the Cuban leader's perspective, there appears little likelihood of change in that relationship, since there is little likelihood of change in the US posture toward Cuba, as Castro has frequently stated.

What impact may the United States hope to have on this relationship? Given the many congruencies of Soviet and Cuban national interests now and in the near future, as well as the political inclinations of both leaderships, it is almost impossible to foresee

that US actions can have more than a negligible impact on Soviet-Cuban relations. Even with an extreme turn in policy—on the one hand, toward a further tightening of economic sanctions in response to Cuba's foreign adventurism, and on the other hand, toward "normalization" of Cuban-American relations to the point of resuming trade relations—the evolution of the Soviet-Cuban relationship would doubtless be dominated by factors beyond Washington's influence. If a "hard-line" US policy option were adopted, current Soviet-Cuban solidarity would inevitably be perpetuated. If a "soft-line" US policy approach were adopted, it would certainly enable the Kremlin to reduce marginally its economic subsidy to Cuba, but there is nothing to suggest that this reduction would be significant in diluting the quality of the Soviet-Cuban relationship.

The preceding analysis addresses the short-term impact of US policy on Soviet-Cuban relations. The longer-term prospects are somewhat different, however. Under a hard-line US policy scenario, the Cuban leadership would still be faced with a menacing superpower to the north, with few policy options from which to choose. In essence, the Cubans would be forced to minimize their differences with the Soviet Union and accentuate their policy congruencies, as they currently appear to be doing. Since policy advantages which the Kremlin presently reaps from its close ties with Havana appear not to be time sensitive, it is reasonable to assume that the post-Brezhnev Soviet leadership would continue to bear the Cuban economic burden. Thus, given the assumption of a hard-line US policy toward Cuba, a continuation of the status quo appears likely.

It is the long-term impact of a soft-line US policy which presents a different prospect. In the next one to two decades a large proportion of the leaderships of the two nations will change, and it is after these leadership changes that the benefits of the hypothetical soft-line US policy might accrue. Put simply, a soft-line policy would increase the options available to the newly emerging Cuban leadership—a leadership probably seeking to solidify its hold on Cuban power (with or without Castro), and therefore willing and able to choose policy options not now available to Castro. These options are not available to him both because of his own political-ideological attitudes and because these options have been precluded by the hardening of American policy toward normalization of relations. The danger of such an

American policy, of course, is that the Cuban leadership—Castro or others—may view it as indicative of American weak will and equivocation and hence conducive to additional Cuban foreign policy activism and risk taking.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion then, it would appear that Soviet-Cuban relations will remain intimate throughout the near-term future. The problems that exist in that relationship are likely to have significance only in the long term, and even then, only if a number of factors coincide: if the Soviets are compelled by their national interests to reduce or eliminate the economic subsidy and if they decide to abandon Cuba and pursue their interests elsewhere. It appears that if the United States were to adopt a "soft-line" policy, the probability of reduced Soviet-Cuban intimacy in the long-term future would be maximized. However, such a policy decision would also increase the risk of Soviet-Cuban adventurism in the short- and mid-term since a soft-line US policy could be construed by the two socialist countries as indicative of weak American resolve. That perception has been a factor in Soviet-Cuban-US relations since 1975 and may now be heightened by the recent setbacks to US foreign policy.

US policy makers are thus faced with a complex choice. Their decision must be based on the answers to a series of other questions which are somewhat beyond the scope of this paper. Nonetheless, if a comprehensive improvement in Cuban-American relations is in the American interest, and if continued Soviet and Cuban political and military adventurism is seen as compromising American security interests, then a new policy is appropriate. The United States should adopt a policy that diminishes the targets of opportunity for the Cubans in the troubled Third World, that also involves the Soviets in exerting a moderating influence over Cuban behavior (mindful at the same time of Moscow's own leverage problems with the Cubans), and that preserves for both the US and Cuban leaderships the option of developing normalized relations to their mutual advantage.

ENDNOTES

1. For an analysis of the problems of Chilean-Soviet relations in the period 1970-73, see Joseph L. Noguee and John W. Sloan, "Allende's Chile and the Soviet Union: A Policy Lesson for Latin American Nations Seeking Autonomy," unpublished paper, University of Houston, 1979. Useful appraisals of Soviet policy in Latin America are: D. Bruce Jackson, *Castro, the Kremlin, and Communism in Latin America*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1969; Leon Goure and Morris Rothenberg, *Soviet Penetration of Latin America*, Miami: University of Miami Press, 1975; J.G. Oswald and A.J. Strover, eds., *The Soviet Union and Latin America*, New York: Praeger, 1970.

2. On this point see Edward Gonzalez, "A Comparison of Soviet and Cuban Approaches to Latin America," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. V, No. 1, Spring 1972, pp. 21-35; and Herbert S. Dinerstein, "Soviet and Cuban Conceptions of Revolution," *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. IV, No. 1, January 1972, pp. 3-22. Dinerstein observed: "Castro through the mouth of (Regis) Debray challenged the Soviet doctrine of revolution and implied that many opportunities for the establishment of communism had been missed because of the conservatism of the Soviet Union and of Communist parties that followed in its lead." (p. 12)

3. On the Eritrea question the Cubans are reluctant to assume a direct combat role in support of Addis Ababa and Soviet policy. See Daniel S. Papp, *Eritrea and the Soviet-Cuban Connection*, Military Issues Research Memorandum, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, July 31, 1978. On Angola, the Cubans have apparently balanced off Soviet influence among the contending factions within the governing Movement for the Liberation of Angola. On this point, see Charles K. Ebinger, "External Intervention in Internal War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Angolan Civil War," *Orbis*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Fall 1976, pp. 697-698, and William M. LeoGrande, paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada, March 22-26, 1979, pp. 26-27.

4. By August 1979 there were approximately 39,000 Cuban military personnel performing combat and security assistance roles along with 12,000 non-diplomatic civilian personnel in the following countries: Angola, Benin, Cape Verde, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Sao Tome and Principe, Tanzania, Zambia, Algeria, Iraq, Libya, People's Republic of Yemen, Western Sahara (Polisario movement), Laos, Vietnam, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, and Nicaragua. Sources: Various editions of *Granma*, *Granma Weekly Review*, *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (Latin America, Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa), *Juventud Rebelde*, *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*.

5. Although Castro proclaimed his revolution socialist during an oration following the initial Bay of Pigs bombardments in April 1961, and avowed himself a Marxist-Leninist in a December 1, 1961 speech, the Soviet Union made no reference to socialism in Cuba until April 11, 1962, when *Pravda* finally acknowledged that the Caribbean island was moving on a socialist road.

6. The Cuban Communist Party did not participate in and was originally skeptical of the revolutionary potential of Castro's movement. Castro came to rely more on the party in the mid-1960's, and it was eventually integrated into the government. For an excellent review of the history of strategic and ideological misgivings, see Jacques Levesque, *The USSR and the Cuban Revolution: Soviet Ideological and Strategic Perspectives, 1959-77*, New York: Praeger, 1978.

7. According to various authorities, the Soviet air and naval deployments are intended more for political than for military reasons. See Cole Blasier, "The Soviet Union in the Cuban-American Conflict," and Jorge I. Dominguez, "The Armed Forces and Foreign Relations," in *Cuba in the World*, ed. by Blasier and Carmelo Mesa-Lago, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1979, pp. 37-51, 53-86.

8. There are indications that the Soviet Union through CMEA gives Cuba preferential treatment in petroleum prices over its East European customers by bracketing Cuba with Mongolia, North Korea, and North Vietnam as developing socialist countries. For additional discussion on Cuba trade relations and prospects for economic development see Carmelo Mesa-Lago, "The Economy and International Economic Relations;" Cole Blasier, "COMECON in Cuban Development;" Theodore H. Moran, "Cuban Nickel Development;" Jorge F. Perez-Lopez, "Sugar and Petroleum in Cuban-Soviet Terms of Trade," in Blasier and Mesa-Lago, *Cuba in the World*.

9. For speculation on the negative economic impact of Cuba's extensive overseas commitments see Mesa-Lago, *Present and Future of Cuba's Economy and International Economic Relations*, unpublished manuscript, University of Pittsburgh, 1977, pp. 9, 13, and footnote 16.

10. The accompanying analysis of Cuba's trade relations is derived from Lawrence Theriot, *Cuba in CMEA*, US Department of Commerce, 1977, pp. 3-5.

11. David Binder, "Venezuela and Soviet Union Reach an Agreement on Oil," *The New York Times*, December 10, 1976, p. D3.

12. Marian Leighton, "Mexico, Cuba, and the Soviet Union: Ferment in the US's Back Yard," *Radio Free Liberty Research*, December 27, 1979, p. 9.

13. "Castro Speech Underscores Close Ties With USSR," Agence France Press, (February 6, 1980) as transcribed in Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Latin America*, February 8, 1980, p. Q1.

14. Don Bohning and Tom Fiedler, "Cuba's Prestige is a Casualty of Afghanistan Invasion," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 10, 1980, p. 5-A; "Mexico Wins a U.N. Council Seat in Vote Viewed as Defeat for Cuba," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1980, p. A-2.

15. Gonzalez, *Problems of Communism*, Vol. 36, No. 6, November-December 1977, pp. 1-15.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

17. In their theoretical writings the Cubans refer to Eurocommunist parties as serious movements that speak about the possibility of achieving socialism through a nonviolent revolutionary process. "We should not preclude the possibility that with a world balance of forces decidedly in favor of the socialist system, the coming to power and establishment of a proletarian state in a given country could take place without use of force." Gaspar Jorge Garcia Gallo, "Focus on Marxism," *Granma Weekly Review*, June 3, 1979, p. 2.

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